

USING THE ADACHI JAPANESE PERFINS CATALOG

by George A. Fisher, Jr.

For the few members of the Perfins Club who do not read Japanese, I can see that it could be somewhat time-consuming to find a particular illustration in ADACHI SUNAO's "Nihon Kigō-iri Zukan" (Catalog of Japanese Stamps with Symbols). Being a relative newcomer to the Club, I don't know whether a translation of Adachi's index has been presented in these pages. Here it is for those who may not have acquired one yet.

The index is on page 4. Pages 5 and 6 contain introductory remarks. Beginning with (I)A, the index goes like this:

- (I)A. Embossed indicia, p. 7 (These are Perfins forerunners or adjuncts; the embossing is colorless and sometimes hard to see. NCB is modern.)
(II)B. Handstamped indicia, p. 8. (None of the handstamps, also Perfins forerunners or adjuncts, is found on stamps later than the Chrysanthemum Series of 1899-1908.)
(III) Perforations:
C. Single roman letters, p. 15. Arranged alphabetically.
D. Single roman letters, framed, p. 17. Arranged by general shape of frame: circles and ellipses, rhomboids, and miscellaneous; alphabetically within frame subgroups.
E. Two roman letters, p. 22. Alphabetically.
F. Two roman letters, framed, p. 12. Arranged by general characteristics of the frame: curvilinear, rhomboidal, triangular, rectilinear. Note that F7 is an oddball: two letters above the Japanese katakana syllabic character "to" (pronounced "toe"), the latter circled.
G. Three roman letters, p. 35. Alphabetically, with exceptions: the ampersand (&) is treated as a letter following "Z" in the K's, but differently on G3; the virgule (/) is considered as a letter; certain circular and oval frames are treated as O's, which they were meant to be; and look out for odd-shaped M's enclosing two letters (G38 is Adachi's personal Perfins).
H. Four or more roman letters, p. 43. Ampersands are considered letters. Grouped according to number of letters, then alphabetically within group. H52 definitely has only 5 letters, but first one has not yet been identified; so far found only on offices-in-China stamps postmarked Shanghai.
J. Single katakana syllabics, p. 49. (Katakana syllabics [see P for the other kind of Japanese syllabic] are simple characters, generally with straight or angular components.) These are in order, but you have to know Japanese to know the order.
K. Single katakana syllabics, framed, p. 50. Actually also includes partial frames which do not fully enclose the syllabic.

which do not fully enclose the syllabic. Curvilinear frames first, followed by angular frames and half frames.

- L. Two katana syllabics, p. 56. In Japanese order. L10 is actually a single syllabic above the Japanese numeral 1.
M. Three katakana syllabics, p. 58. Includes framed or partially framed symbols containing three katakana. M20 is two syllabics above Japanese numeral 1; M33 is an angle and two syllabics. In Japanese order.
N. Four or more katakana syllabics, p. 62. In Japanese syllabic order as a group. N2, N4, N6 contain 5 katakana; all others have 4.
P. Hiragana syllabics, p. 64. These syllabics are generally somewhat more complicated and curvilinear than the katakana.) Includes unframed and framed in Japanese order.
Q. Single kanji characters, p. 65. Kanji is the Japanese word meaning "Chinese character," or ideograph. Whereas katakana and hiragana are simply syllables (as a, i, u, e, o, ka, ki, ku, ke, ko, sa, shi, su, se, so, etc.), kanji are words. In general use there are 50 hiragana syllabics and corresponding katakana; big newspapers stocked 40,000 kanji before the post-World War II character simplification, but many thousands are still in use. Arrangement unknown, but definitely not by dictionary sequence or pronunciation of the characters. See T for kanji numerals.
R. Single kanji characters, framed, p. 69. Includes partial frames. Arranged by general characteristics of frame: curvilinear, angular.
S. Two kanji characters, p. 76. With or without frames or partial frames.
T. Numerals, p. 78. Includes both Japanese and Arabic numerals. Several Japanese numerals resemble katakana syllabics, so look here if you can't find something under katakana. Japanese numerals are actually kanji.
W. Trademarks and designs, p. 80. Many of these consist of framed kana and kanji characters and could have been justifiably included in other sections. So look here if you can't find Perfins elsewhere.
X. Navy anchors, p. 90. Used by the Ministry of the Navy. X5 contains 3 katakana syllabics in its design: SA-SE-HO, which equals Sasebo, site of a large naval base.
Y. Perforated cancellations, p. 92. Used on Taiwan postal-savings folders in 1923. Design is symbol of the Taiwan Government General Communications Department.